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## They remember Audie Special day will honor famous Texas war hero

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Audie Murphy will live again Thursday in the hearts of the Northeast Texas country folks he called his own.

His 86-year-old father, along with his brothers, sisters, wife and friends, will gather on the little courthouse square in Greenville to hear again the glories of his deed and dreams.

It'll be a happy day – a typical Audie Murphy day – all the way.

Gov. Dolph Briscoe will be there to lend new light to the lingering legend, and the U.S. Army Band from Fort Hood will be on hand to strike up some stirring marches to properly mark the memory.

Three or four top military leaders, including Lt. Gen. P. F. Cassidy of the U.S. Fifth Army and Maj. Gen. John Q. Henlon, commander of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command at Hampton, Va., have indicated they'll also take part in the memorial to Murphy.

After the music is muffled and speeches are said, the city of Greenville will dedicate an Audie Murphy Memorial Room in its public library to show off Murphy's medals and mementos.

Then, lest anyone ever forgets, the State of Texas will unveil two historical markers close to Murphy's birthplace and old stomping grounds near Kingston a few miles northwest of Greenville.

But that's not all. The Army is organizing an "Audie Murphy Platoon" for new enlistees from Northeast Texas to serve with Murphy's famous Third Infantry Division at

Wurzburg, Germany. The idea was conceived by S/Sgt. Jerry G. Smith, the Army recruiter at Greenville.

The little half-pint warrior, believed to be the most decorated soldier in American history, was killed on Memorial Day in 1971, a few days before his 47<sup>th</sup> birthday, when the airplane he was riding in crashed near Roanoke, Va.

It took a mountain to stop him.

He was a battlefield genius who fought the enemy with everything from a bayonet to field artillery. Officially, he's credited with killing or capturing 240 Germans during the 39 months he served in the European Theater of Operations during World War II.

He won the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Purple Heart (three times), the Bronze Star, the Legion of Merit, the French Croix de Guerre, the Belgian Croix de Guerre and a dozen other medals and citations.

They say the freckled-faced farm boy was superbly fitted for combat, even though he only weighed 130 pounds. His reflexes were reputed to be incredibly fast; he had the kind of mind that could instantly size up a situation and see how to handle it. His commanding officer said he had an "uncommon amount" of guts and courage, yet Murphy was always first to admit his fear.

"I never moved into combat," Murphy once said, "without having the feeling of a cold

hand reaching into my guts and twisting them into knots.”

He must have felt that hand the day he won the nation’s highest honor. Faced with a desperate situation – the Germans were advancing on his cut-up company from three directions- he jumped on top of a burning tank destroyer and turned its lone machine gun on the enemy. When the smoke cleared, nearly 100 Germans lay dead or wounded in the snow.

He did it all by himself. His refusal to give an inch of ground saved his company from encirclement and destruction and gave his division time to regroup its forces.

By VE Day (May 8, 1945), Murphy was exhausted. He’d given the Army every ounce of strength he possessed “because he believed in the greatness of America.”

His sharecropper family, who lived in a shack on the edge of a cotton patch, believed in him, just as strongly.